

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-28 are pending in the application. Claims 3, 14, and 22-25 have been previously withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-13, 15-21, 26-28 are rejected. Claim 5 has been cancelled. Certain claims have been amended. No Previously Presented matter is believed to have been added. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The drawings have been accepted. The Examiner's objections and rejections are addressed in substantially the same order as in the pending Office Action.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 21, 26, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,213,226 to Eppink et al.

Claims 1 and 21

In rejecting claims 1 and 21, the Examiner agrees that “it is not specifically taught that each of the first plurality of independently adjustable ribs is independently controlled since it is preferred that the blades actuate simultaneously (col. 15, lines 25-26). Nevertheless, it is taught that each blade has its own individual piston extender and return spring, thereby making each blade capable of independent control (col. 15, lines 20-25). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the known capabilities of the stabilizers to achieve the predictable result of individual control of the adjustable ribs when a nonpreferred situation arise downhole wherein the preferred capability of the ribs will not allow the tool to operate properly.” (emphasis added)

Claims 1 and 21 have been clarified to recite that the direction of drilling is controlled by independently operating the ribs. The “preferred” operation of the ribs in Eppink et al. is to control the drilling direction. However, as noted previously, “simultaneous” control over the ribs is used for such situations. The Examiner has not indicated what may be a “nonpreferred” situation. Nevertheless, since directional drilling is a major aspect of Eppink et al., control of drilling direction, in Applicant's view, cannot be considered a “nonpreferred” situation. In summary, there is no teaching or suggestion in Eppink et

al. for controlling a direction of drilling by, in part, independently controlling each of the first plurality of independently adjustable ribs.

Claims 7, 9, 10, 13, and 15-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppink et al in view of US 5,220,963 to Patton. Claims 7, 9, and 10 depend from amended claim 1, which is believed to non-obvious over Eppink et al for the reasons discussed above. Claims 13 and 15-20 depend from amended claim 12, which is believed to non-obvious over Eppink et al for the reasons discussed above. Thus, claims 7, 9, 10, 13, and 15-20 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee and credit any overpayment associated with this response to Deposit Account No. **13-0010 (564-12835-USCQ)**.

Respectfully submitted,

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